

The athletic shoe should fit the activity

While Maryland Catholics are told cardiovascular exercise is good for their body and soul, it's another sole that can prevent injuries during their fitness regimen.

Choosing the proper shoe for a particular purpose is a key ingredient in maintaining the feet and legs while achieving good health, skill and endurance, said Jim Adams, owner of Falls Road Running Store in Mount Washington.

"You can use a cross-trainer as a jack-of-all-trades/master-of-none if you do a little bit of all the different activities but don't concentrate extensive concentrated activity in any one," Mr. Adams said. "A cross-trainer is the shoe of choice for a person who works out in a gym, plays some court sports here and there, and may run five or 10 minutes a few times a week."

For people who expend their energy on specific athletic activities, the shoe itself should be designed for the action, he said, and wearing a running shoe for tennis or basketball can cause the athlete to be more susceptible to spraining an ankle or wearing out the foot gear prematurely.

"Running shoes do not have the lateral support or the tread to tolerate the spins and foot plants in a court sport," Mr. Adams said. "In a court shoe, look for a herringbone tread with a circle on the ball of the foot. This will facilitate good traction on a hard surface and the tread should hold up under moderate use."

On the flipside, running extensively in court shoes or the wrong type of running shoe can lead to repetitive-motion soft tissue injuries like plantar fasciitis, shin splints, and Iliotibial Band Syndrome, he said.

"A running shoe should be shaped like your foot - straight or curved. If your foot pronates excessively, you should consider shoes with dual density posting," Mr. Adams said. "The proper running shoe can prevent and sometimes relieve running-related injuries."

Some of these 'minor' repetitive-use injuries can last for months and be extremely painful, to a point where the end result may be casting or surgery, he said.

"The problem is that once aggravated, simple day-to-day activities like getting out of bed barefoot re-aggravate the condition and make it worse," Mr. Adams said.

A good pair of athletic shoes should cost about \$100, but the expense can benefit the athlete by preventing injuries and improving performance, he said.